



# Australasian Intercultural Cities Workshop

Wednesday 23 January 2019  
Melton Library and Learning Hub  
City of Melton, Australia

## REPORT

Prepared by: Jessica Trijsburg and Danielle Vandermey, City of Melton



**DIVERCITIES**  
**NETWORK**  
AUSTRALASIA

## AGENDA

Attendees: City of Ballarat: Jenny Fink and Frances Salenga  
City of Maribyrnong: Catherine Hedley and Petr Svoboda  
City of Melton: Jessica Trijsburg and Essan Dileri  
City of Logan: Samantha Phillips  
City of Auckland: Liz Civil and James Ruhfus (*via Zoom*)  
City of Salisbury: Myfanwy Mogford (*via Zoom*)  
Meiji University Tokyo: Keizo Yamawaki (*via Zoom*)  
Intercultural Cities Expert Australasia: Lynda Ford  
iGen Foundation: Mehak Sheikh  
Danielle Vandermeij (minute taker)

- 9:30am **Welcome and City Case Studies**
- 10:00am **Intercultural Cities Coordinators Meeting 2018:** Initiatives of interest and reflections on the meeting in Croatia  
*Jenny Fink, City of Ballarat*
- 10:30am **What's Happening:** Snapshot of what's happened in Intercultural Cities globally in 2018, and what's planned for 2019  
*Lynda Ford, Intercultural Cities Expert Australasia*
- 11:00am **Building the Network:** How do we communicate, adapt to the Australasian context, Terms of Reference, the role of elected representatives, etc  
*Discussion facilitated by Jessica Trijsburg, City of Melton*
- 11:45am **Tabling of Issues for Discussion/Collective Action:** Which issues do we want the network to collectively engage with, and how  
*Discussion facilitated by Catherine Hedley, City of Maribyrnong*
- 12:30pm **Lunch and close**

## CITY CASE STUDIES

Cities were invited to present a 5 minute case study of an Intercultural initiative from their Council to enhance the learning opportunities of the workshop, and help introduce each other to our respective contexts.

- City of Ballarat
- Australia's first Intercultural City, Ballarat has a number of intercultural programs and projects are delivered in line with their intercultural strategic plan. These include:
- **Intercultural Ambassador program** This trains leaders of diverse cultural backgrounds within the community, and now has 50 ambassadors who have had an impact in communities across Ballarat
  - **Intercultural Employment Pathways Program** This program, in line with the Council Plan, looks into pathways for education for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers. City of Ballarat has now hired a Business Engagement Officer to focus on these goals

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- City of Maribyrnong
- The City of Maribyrnong has an increasing migrant population and a well-established Asian and African business community. We have only recently become an Intercultural City during a Children's Week event, bilingual storytime. Our former Mayor is a Vietnamese refugee and a great advocate for celebration of our Multicultural community.
- Programs/projects:
- **Footscray University Town** is a partnership with the local university, Victoria University to support learning, arts and cultural diversity.
  - **Maribyrnong Brimbank Interfaith Network (BMIN)** is a joint initiative between the two neighbouring Councils. They joined forces in 2009 and have created an advisory committee, providing an opportunity for people of different cultures and faiths to come together for events, forums and projects focusing on social issues such as promoting positive masculinity in faith communities and preventing violence against women.
  - Maribyrnong's **Youth Services** works closely with local youth and their parents to promote interfaith and intergenerational understanding. In the next two years the BMIN will organise a series of workshops with young people focusing on practical projects lead by young people.

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- City of Melton
- Australia's second Intercultural City, Melton is on the western fringe of culturally diverse Melbourne. It has a very diverse and rapidly growing community.
- Programs/projects:
- **Intercultural plan** endorsed, in which one of the goals was to create a specific **Interfaith Strategy**. This has led to a new position of Interfaith Officer to lead the Interfaith Leaders

Program working closely with Wyndham and Interfaith Council of VIC

- A combined **Interfaith calendar** was created to communicate the Intercultural Plan to community, as a more accessible format than standard strategic documents. This has now become an annual project, and artworks have been commissioned for 2020

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City of Auckland

Greater Auckland has a population in excess of 1,415,550 (2013) that is highly culturally diverse.

**The Southern Initiative** (TSI) is a major place-based regeneration programme.

Almost 20 per cent of Auckland's population lives in the area covered by TSI. The population is youthful, primarily Pasifika and Māori, and abundant in assets, talent, creativity and opportunity.

Create, foster and support innovative social change by:

- identifying local change makers
- brokering relationships
- procuring assets and services strategically
- encouraging social enterprise
- building community and individual capability
- supporting and amplifying community-driven initiatives.

One project – a collaboration between Sikh temples and Cook Island women made it to the nightly news, as they repurposed sacred temple cloths into traditional quilting.

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City of Logan

Logan has a rapidly growing population with almost 30% people born overseas. The city is at the beginning of its intercultural journey, but has had some significant projects to date.

Programs/projects:

- **Cemetery Master Plan** led by the parks department, includes consideration for interfaith burials and incorporates aspects suitable to different faiths across the region
- **Welcome signs** Logan received one of the lowest scores from the community for feeling of welcome. Council has been doing work around this, and welcome signs in 40 different languages, are now displayed along the main streets of Logan and throughout the city
- **Intercultural Pathway** This pathway design incorporates the colours of all of the flags from countries represented in Logan, deconstructed into bands of colour, and reconstructed into one main flag that's now built into a pathway, with an Aboriginal artwork designed shaded, living pergola above

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City of Salisbury

In South Australia, Salisbury is new to the Intercultural space. An intercultural strategic plan was released approx. 1 year ago, which included the intercultural cities program.

Projects/programs:

- **Salisbury Intercultural Community Alliance** is currently being established & recruiting members aiming to have a

composition representative of the cultural diversity within the City.

- Create **communication channels** between staff and community around issues in Salisbury
- **Reference group** Plans are underway to create a group representative of different cultures, to work together as a project group to identify opportunities to work cross-culturally on a range of projects - focus on cultural celebrations and bringing people together.

Lynda Ford reminded all Cities to ensure ideas and content are uploaded onto their respective pages of the Intercultural Cities website to share our stories and ideas.

## PRESENTATIONS

### **Intercultural Cities Coordinators Meeting 2018** - Jenny Fink, City of Ballarat

The 2018 Intercultural Cities Coordinator's Meeting was held in Rijeka, Croatia. Rijeka is the principal seaport and the third-largest city in Croatia (after Zagreb and Split). Rijeka is a coastal city on the Adriatic Sea and has a population of 128,624 inhabitants and was chosen for the location of the conference because it has received intercultural city accreditation and it shows. The city like the rest of Croatia is still recovering economically, physically and emotionally from the Croatian War of Independence fought in the early 1990's.

The meeting was held in this venue RiHub, in fact the ICC meeting was the first program to be presented at the hub. It turned out to be a really interesting place located in the central Rijeka shopping centre.

The aim of RiHub is to establish a better cooperation between the community the local government. The Rijeka Town Council has assigned 10 council officers from different city departments to RiHub workplace.

Their goal is to test existing ideas and to encourage people to submit new ideas. Cooperation with different citizen groups will ignite concrete projects dealing with concrete problems or improving life in the city in other ways. The results will be a series of publicly accessible structured guidelines for civil innovations.

One of the best things about attending ICC Coordinators meetings is listening to new ideas and bringing them back home. Each meeting has a 1 or 2 segments called thematic discussions – testing new approaches. Two of particular interest are *Days of Dialogue* and the *Diversity Charter*.

*Days of Dialogue* comes from the Netherlands and is a community engagement tool that shares experience and builds ideas through dialogue. Imagine a group of diverse people taking part in a guided conversation, this diversity can be age, gender, cultural, religious or social. Days of dialogue builds social cohesion and acceptance and creates better mutual understanding. The Netherlands has been using this

approach for the last 10 years and now celebrate an annual week of dialogue primarily because it works perfectly as an ideas generator. In the near future the intercultural cities program will offer online training in how to facilitate dialogue sessions.

*Diversity Charters* are really interesting and reminded me of our new and future approach with gender equity. Diversity charters are an initiative from the European Commission to promote diversity and equal opportunity in the workplace. This is a brief rundown of how it works. An organisation like the City of Ballarat signs a diversity charter and implements its principles in the workplace. It then talks about the charter to every organisation that it partners with or has some type of relationship with, those organisations in turn commit to the principles and sign on as a signatory organisation. It has been highly effective in countries like Portugal that established a charter and now has signatory organisations who share practice, attend training and other events to promote inclusive workplaces. The Portuguese charter also includes a toolkit.

The Council of Europe has developed guidelines for local authorities to develop participatory practice that help determine or influence the decisions and responsibilities of public authorities beyond voting in elections. It's giving a voice to the community beyond public question time and even beyond community engagement. It's really embedding and welcoming diverse participation and opening avenues for people to engage with the issues that affect their everyday lives.

Examples of this are:

- publicly elected local officials
- Ensuring diversity in consultation processes
- Third parties managing the civic participation process
- Sufficient time given to the public to offer suggestion, ideas and be involved
- Decisions are delayed until an optimal level of consultation, dialogue and active involvement has been reached
- Future decisions/issues/programs/projects are flagged with the public early enough for them to put their hand up to be involved in active participation

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## **What's Happening in Intercultural Cities globally in 2018, and what's planned for 2019**

- *Lynda Ford, Intercultural Cities Expert Australasia*

An initial overview of the Intercultural Cities Team – who to contact, and how it works. There are 134 cities across 34 countries. Three in Australia are currently endorsed. Regional networks have been created in a number of countries, to reflect their contexts and needs.

Firstly, the Intercultural Cities team:

- Irena Guidikova – Head of Division – Inclusion and anti-discrimination programs
- Ivana D'Alessandro – Head of Unit – Intercultural Cities Programme

- Francesca Lionetti – ICC projects
- Pascale Doré - Accounts and payments

Beyond this, there are 24 Intercultural Cities Experts, able to provide specialist advice on their thematic area or generally, as well as contacts and resources to those involved in Intercultural Cities.

Intercultural Cities also has a number of Thematic Initiatives:

- *Anti-rumours campaign* – originated in Barcelona by Dani de Torres; now being trialled and evaluated – many cities including more than 20 in Spain
- *Business and diversity*:
  - Diversity Connectors for startups – designing business incubators for inclusion of cultural diversity
  - Rating diversity in business - tool based on a Danish project with ISS companies with the most diverse management teams have an operating profit margin of 12.6 % more than companies with the least diverse management teams
- *Cultural heritage and diversity* – STEPs project – heritage mapping for community cohesion
- *Div-A – Diversity Accelerator for Media* – inclusion of diversity in the media through support and development of new media startups
- *Refugee Story Map* – mapping innovative projects for former refugee inclusion

Intercultural Cities' International Initiatives include:

- International Day against racial discrimination
- International Migrants Day 18 December
- World Refugee Day
- World Day for Cultural Diversity
- International Mother Language Day

And to provide an idea of some of the innovative practice across the network, some Current City Initiatives:

- Erlangen – photo competition for migrants
- Rijeka – Diversity Mixer for cultural diversity in creative industries
- Mexico City – National Planning Law 2018 – baseline policy for all national programs
- Neukölln - policy and principles of good governance as an intercultural city
- Tokyo – intercultural city seminar – with Ballarat and Melton
- Limassol - Intercultural Police training course
- Vynnytsia – inter-faith roundtable
- Lublin, Reggio-Emilia, Subotica, Huddersfield creative project to prevent extremism
- Turin - Open Mosque
- “Open Window” Young Intercultural Ambassadors – Santa Maria de Feira, Melitopol, Mons and Toronto

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## **Building the Australasian Network** - facilitated by Jessica Trijsburg, City of Melton

DiverCities Network Australasia (DNA) is the regional network of the Intercultural Cities network. DNA is a collaboration between local governments, academics and practitioners in New Zealand, Japan and Australia to strengthen evidence-based good practice of interculturalism in the Asia-Pacific. DNA is funded and convened by iGen Foundation.

The network continues to grow and flourish, but with this comes challenges on the ground for the Australasia Network. These include the limitations of capacity to introduce new cities as each city takes a significant amount of time, and funding for staff time and expertise.

Now that we have three cities in Australia, and one in Japan, accepted into the Intercultural Cities network, the group discussed the key questions of:

- How do we want to build our network?
- What do we want our network to look like?
- How do we want to communicate with each other and more broadly?
- How do we adapt Intercultural Cities practice to the Australasian context?

Communication challenges were acknowledged, given the large geographical distances between many member cities – and especially between Europe and Australia, and the need to provide enough lead-time with communications to be able to participate in activities.

It was raised that for Australasian attendance at ICC coordinators meetings, given the distance, it would be very helpful to align the timing with an additional masterclass day or two with experts presenting on various topics and/or field visits, working groups or policy labs, to enable participation of those attending the ICC Coordinators meeting. This would make attendance at such a distance and expense worthwhile.

It was noted that the next Coordinators meeting will be in September 2019, in Odessa, Ukraine.

For the local network in Australasia, there is a preference for face-to-face communication, but this is not always possible, so online platforms such as conference calls and emails will be used. Issues of timing to allow for participation in differing time zones, and language of communication were also raised.

It is proposed that the network will connect quarterly using online platforms and once a year face-to-face to discuss updates, new approaches, share resources, feature intercultural programs and projects, and issue joint statements, campaigns, and joint projects.

There is a desire to find ways to be more integrated into the European network, both in order to connect and learn from their experiences, and also to be able to demonstrate return on investment for Council fees, when so much of the activity is Europe-based. There is a lack of understanding between Europe and Australasia of our respective contexts, based on limited contact. It was noted that cities can make use of the links already available to them to communicate directly with other cities, but it was also recognised that in Australia, many of us only have knowledge of



European and Council of Europe programs from reading documents, papers, emails and websites which limits the ability to connect with and fully realise the opportunities. It is hoped that the visit by a Council of Europe representative in 2019 will provide an opportunity for the Intercultural Cities team to gain understanding of our context and understand the dynamics of our communities, and for the local network to better understand the Intercultural Cities program in Europe.

There is a need to increase the local profile and buy-in to Intercultural Cities, and this can be done in a number of ways, including by increasing involvement of elected representatives, and by having a combined project for the network to collectively work on. It was suggested that we organise major events and put the Intercultural Cities/DiverCities branding out there, as well as participating in, or commissioning, research with universities through the network. The network can also be part of major events organised by other networks and possibly have a tangible contribution in the form of presenting a paper or project together under the Intercultural Cities/DiverCities brand.

Financing the network was also a topic of significant discussion, with some ideas provided including combined applications to external funding sources, and negotiating an agreement with the Intercultural Cities program. The suggestion was made to learn how other networks are funded and mirror a similar arrangement if suitable.

The governance and operationalization of the network will be developed into a draft Terms of Reference for review by all parties. This will stipulate the membership, roles and responsibilities of all parties, communication, and the leadership structure with a proposed rotating chair, deputy chair, and admin support. It was acknowledged that the support of the Australasian Intercultural Cities Expert is important, and should be remunerated.

In considering membership of the network, a suggestion was made that peak bodies and others operating in our Intercultural Cities, beyond the Local Government Authorities themselves, could have a formal role in the network. It is incumbent upon each member to promote Intercultural Cities and encourage potential organisations to become part of the network, within the endorsed framework of the forthcoming Terms of Reference. The distinction was raised between membership of the Intercultural Cities Network which is by application process and paid membership, and the DiverCities Network, which includes any city interested in working interculturally alongside academics and practitioners including, but not limited to, Intercultural Cities. There is some confusion about who is member of what, and what entitlements each brings, which will be addressed and ameliorated by the development of the Terms of Reference.

Finally, the discussion of how to adapt the Intercultural Cities framework and practice to an Australasian context was held over for further discussion at a future meeting, when we can explore in depth the elements of our work that are unique to this region given our geographical location and the nature of our communities. It was noted,

however, that the Australian Intercultural Standards have been developed by Dr Glenda Ballantyne, Lynda Ford, and Dr Amrita Malhi, and this can now be distributed.

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**Tabling of Issues for Discussion/Collective Action** - facilitated by Catherine Hedley, City of Maribyrnong

There is tremendous opportunity for us to learn from and connect with the 134 Intercultural Cities around the world, including those in the DiverCities Australasia Network, and collectively influence change. This final session for the day focused on the key questions of:

- What are the shared issues that we can/should address as a network?
- How will these be determined (by what mechanisms)?

On the topic of 'shared issues', discussion centred on issues of broader relevance throughout Australasia, including:

- 26 January (Australia-specific)
- Anti-racism and discrimination
- Economic development and employment
- Settlement of refugees and other migrants

It was suggested that this be reviewed and updated to reflect current issues as experienced by our sector, for example: Racism and discrimination are issues extensively discussed in consultations / forums. The mechanism by which these issues will be selected will be included in the Terms of Reference for the network, and will include both 'network-wide' issues, and 'opt-in/opt-out' issues.

Discussion then progressed to sharing ideas about how to create change in the identified areas, and included visible mechanisms such as public art, festivals, and a conference as well as partnerships, including with community organisations, other Local Government Authorities, community health providers and the Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network (VLGMIN).

The group discussed potential collaborative activities such as research projects, working groups, and a Diversity Charter. The need to share information and best practice, support internal change making, and the alignment of strategic documents were all acknowledged, as was the value of social media and broader promotion of initiatives.

NOTE: This discussion, and the previous discussion about Building the Network, occurred with some technological interruption for those who were participating remotely, so a written list of questions and prompts for these two sessions was provided to all participants following the workshops, and the subsequent written input collated and added to this report.

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## **ACTIONS**

1. Develop a draft Terms of Reference for the network, and circulate for review.
2. Form a working group to plan towards a network conference and dinner to align with the upcoming visit by Irena Guidikova, Head of Division – Inclusion and anti-discrimination programmes at Council of Europe in July/August 2019.
3. Distribute the Australian Intercultural Standards to all participants.

**END OF REPORT**